

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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R 191615Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6444  
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
USMISSION USUN NY

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E. O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF, PLO  
SUBJECT: ASAD VISIT TO MOSCOW

REFS: A. 76 MOSCOW 19377 (NOTAL, B. MOSCOW 1734 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. INITIAL COVERAGE OF ASAD VISIT TO MOSCOW  
INDICATES THAT BOTH SIDES ARE TRYING TO PROJECT IMAGE  
OF MODERATION ON ME SETTLEMENT ISSUE. BREZHNEV COMMENTS  
ON ISRAEL ARE ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY. ARAB AMBASSADORS  
HERE BELIEVE THIS MAY BE FIRST SUCH EXPLICIT SOVIET  
PUBLIC REFERENCE TO ISRAELI STATE DELIVERED IN PRESENCE  
OF MAJOR ARAB LEADER. BREZHNEV OMISSION OF PHRASE "FROM  
VERY BEGINNING" FROM FORMULATION ON PLO PARTICIPATION  
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IN GENEVA CONFERENCE MAY BE SOVIET SIGNAL OF  
FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO TIMING OF PALESTINIAN  
PARTICIPATION. BREZHNEV KILLS TWO BIRDS WITH ONE  
STONE BY CONDEMNING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ZAIRE  
(AND, BY IMPLICATION, ALSO IN LEBANON). ASAD  
DEVOTES A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF HIS ANSWERING  
REMARKS TO DETAILED DEFENSE OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION.

END SUMMARY.

1. BREZHNEV SPEECH REPORTED IN APRIL 19 PRAVDA  
CONTAINS FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT POINTS:

--ISRAEL. SOVIET UNION IS FOR UNCONDITIONAL  
RETURN TO SYRIA AND OTHER "VICTIMS OF AGRESSION" OF  
THEIR AGE-OLD LANDS TAKEN BY ISRAEL. DURABLE PEACE  
WHICH "FLOUTS VITAL INTERESTS" OF ANY STATE OR PEOPLE  
IN ME IS IMPOSSIBLE. THIS IS VALID (ABOVE ALL) FOR  
"ARABIAN PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" AND FOR ALL OTHER PEOPLE  
"INCLUDING THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL." "ALL  
POSSESS THE RIGHT TO STATE INDEPENDENCE AND SECURE  
EXISTENCE." COMMENT. SEVERAL ARAB AMBASSADORS AT  
APRIL 19 RECEPTION FOR ASAD WERE STRUCK BY BREZHNEV'S  
EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO STATE OF ISRAEL. THEY BELIEVE  
THIS MAY BE FIRST SUCH PUBLIC, SOVIET STATEMENT ON STATE  
OF ISRAEL DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF MAJOR ARAB LEADER.  
END COMMENT.

--PLO. IT IS SELF UNDERSTOOD THAT PLO --  
LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN ARABS --  
SHOULD TAKE PART ON AN EQUAL BASIS IN THE WORK OF  
THE CONFERENCE. FIRM SOVIET POSITION IS THAT NO  
DECISION CONCERNING THE ARABIAN PEOPLE OF PALESTINE  
BE TAKEN WITHOUT THE PALESTINIANS OR AGAINST THEIR  
WILL. COMMENT. BREZHNEV'S OMISSION OF PHRASE "FROM  
VERY BEGINNING" RE PLO PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA, MAY  
BE SIGNIFICANT, PARTICULARLY GIVEN INCLUSION OF THIS  
PHRASE IN TASS ANNOUNCEMENT DESCRIBING THE INITIAL  
TALKS. ARAB AMBASSADORS CITED ABOVE ARE CONVINCED  
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THAT BREZHNEV'S OMISSION IS A SIGNAL THAT SOVIETS  
WILL NOT INSIST ON PLO PARTICIPATION FROM VERY BEGINNING  
OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. END COMMENT.

--ZAIRE. SOVIET UNION OPPOSES INTERFERENCE IN  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHERS AND WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES  
FOR THOSE WHO SPREAD CONFLICT IN AND AROUND ZAIRE  
(SEPTTEL);

--SOVIET-SYRIAN COOPERATION. IMPORTANT TO THINK  
ABOUT COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ON PRESSING INTERNATIONAL  
PROBLEMS -- ABOVE ALL ME PROBLEMS. "THERE ARE  
POSSIBILITIES FOR THIS."

2. ASAD'S SPEECH NOTED THE DURABILITY OF SOVIET-SYRIAN  
RELATIONS WHICH, HE SAID, HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN GOING THROUGH  
"COMPLICATED" TIMES IN RECENT YEARS. HE DESCRIBED  
THE "STRATEGIC CHARACTER" OF THE RELATIONSHIP.  
HE THEN CALLED FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAEL FROM  
THE ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND FOR THE  
RECOGNITION BY HE ISRAELIS OF THE RIGHT OF

PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION.

3. IN A RATHER CURIOUS PASSAGE, ASAD APPROVINGLY DESCRIBED SOVIET ME POLICY, MENTIONING MOSCOW'S ROLE AS A GREAT POWER AND AS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE UNSC. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A LENGTHY, DETAILED DEFENSE OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON EMPHASIZING SYRIAN-LEBANESE TIES AND SYRIA'S INTEREST IN PRESERVING "PALESTINIAN RESOLUTION" BY PROTECTING IT FROM LOCAL DISCORD AND DIRECTING IT TOWARD THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ISRAELI AGRESSORS. HE SAID CONTINUING CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WAS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE AND WOULD BE ELIMINATED. ASAD CONCLUDED WITH PIOUS EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN SOVIET COOPERATION AND SUPPORT AND WITH PLEA THAT JOINT EFFORTS FOR PEACE BE FOR A JUST PEACE NOT ADVANTAGEOUS TO ONLY ONE SIDE.

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4. COMMENT: OUR IMPRESSION FROM READING SPEECHES IS THAT BOTH SIDES ARE TRYING TO PROJECT MODERATE, STATESMANLIKE IMAGE. ASAD'S CONCERN THAT SOVIET UNION MIGHT EVEN BE TOO MODERATE, I.E., MIGHT LEAN TOO FAR TOWARD THE ISRAELIS, COMES ACROSS IN THE FINAL PORTION OF HIS SPEECH REPORTED ABOVE. ASAD ALSO SEEMS CONCERNED IN HIS SPEECH TO REASSURE THE SOVIET UNION THAT ITS LONG TERM SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IS APPRECIATED AND IS NECESSARY DESPITE THE TACTICAL DIFFERENCES WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, PRIMARILY OVER LEBANON.

5. WE ARE STRUCK BY BOTH BREZHNEV AND ASAD PHRASES ON ISRAEL. WHILE GIVING NO QUARTER ON ISSUE OF RETURN TO 1967 BOUNDARIES THE STATEMENTS AT LEAST LIMIT THE DEMANDS FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THOSE LINES, THUS IMPLICITLY -- FOR THE SYRIANS -- AND EXPLICITLY -- FOR THE SOVIETS -- RECOGNIZING THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL WITHIN THE 1967 LINES. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO THE VAGUE LANGUAGE ON THE "OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES" SEEN IN THE COMMUNIQUE ON THE RECENT VISITS HERE OF THE IRAQIS AND THE LIBYANS (REFTELS). OF COURSE, WE HAVE YET TO SEE THE FINAL FORMULATION WHICH WILL BE USED IN THE COMMUNIQUE MARKING THE CONCLUSION OF ASAD'S VISIT. THE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE WILL BE MORE AUTHORITATIVE THAN THE LANGUAGE USED BY BREZHNEV AND ASAD IN THEIR SPEECHES IMPORTANT AS THE LATTER MAY BE. TOON

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## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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